

CHILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dr. Claire Martin, Superintendent
Dawn Bartel, Administrative Assistant

Good evening,

October 30, 2013

My name is Richard Appel. Thank you to the committee for allowing me a few moments to speak to you about Common Core State Standards and the passion I have for reaching and teaching all kids. I served in the United States Army for over twenty-four years retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. I am here to testify on the impact of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) on both the military families and on the impact that CCSS will have on all children as a whole. Besides serving in the US Army for 24 years, I have also had the good fortune to serve our communities and children as an educator for 27 years. I have been a principal at Chilton public schools for the past 19 of those years.

I have deployed to some of the most dangerous locations of Iraq and Africa and have witnessed firsthand what other societies desire as they make every attempt to rebuild and bring back normalcy to their lives. While serving in Iraq, I was responsible for the reconstruction of the educational system along with teacher training and curriculum development. Through all of my missions the message from parents and families remained the same, security, food and water, along with the education of their children for a better tomorrow ALL were their top priorities. A nation and society is only as strong as the educational system that helps develop their youth as tomorrow's leaders.

I believe we have the best educational system in the world. We educate all children no matter what their race, orientation, gifts or disability. Are all of our schools and states equal? No they aren't, but Common Core is the best plan I have seen in my 27 years and is endorsed by the Military Child Education Coalition who represent thousands of military families throughout our country.

Why are CCSS so important to military-connected students?

According to the Military Child Education Coalition there are 1,207,628 military aged students aged 5-18 attending schools nationwide, with the State of Wisconsin educating 8,908 of those students in our schools. Let me tell you about just one case in my school. I recently had a young man enroll in my school from Alaska as his dad was deployed for over a year. He is a phenomenal young man with incredible work ethics, manners and a personality that will serve him with great success in his future. He arrived to us however being quite behind academically due to what he had been taught in Alaska. He recognizes the difference and has asked me for additional support for which we are providing. It's not his fault, nor is it Alaska's schools fault. It's a system error that needs to be fixed.

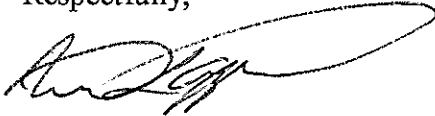
The education experience for many military-connected students can be frustrating. Some students find themselves in a class where they do not have the expected knowledge and skills needed to do well, skills their classmates learned the previous year. Other students find themselves repeating material and are expected to be content to spend class time "reviewing." The adoption and implementation of CCSS are a critical step and particularly important to the mobile military-connected student because they provide consistency, continuity, and clear expectations of the knowledge and skills students need in each grade.

The adoption of CCSS is critically important to our nation. CCSS adoption is particularly important to our mobile military connected students as they move from state to state and district to district during their kindergarten through high school years.

The students and staff in Chilton have embraced the Common Core Standards, not for just the content changes to our curriculum, but the methods for which we are instructing our students. Students are challenged more than ever before as they critically think and problem solve in order to develop the answer that best meets the question. I have never seen the level of team work and higher order thinking skills used as they tackle relevant real world problems. We've come too far over the last two years and to stop the train of progress that I have seen would be a shame.

As our service members and their families continually sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy, passage of Common Core State Standards afford military families one less change to face in their transitions and add one more item of familiarity to their world.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Appel', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Richard Appel
Middle School Principal
Chilton Public Schools
Chilton, Wisconsin

Lieutenant Colonel
U.S. Army - Retired